

The Islamic Review

Edited by AL-HAJ KHWAJA KAMAL-UD-DIN.

XVII.]

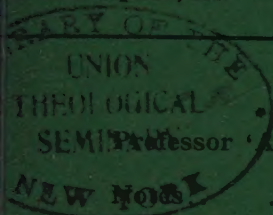
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SHA'BÂN-RAMAZÂN, 1347 A.H.

FEBRUARY, 1929 A.C.

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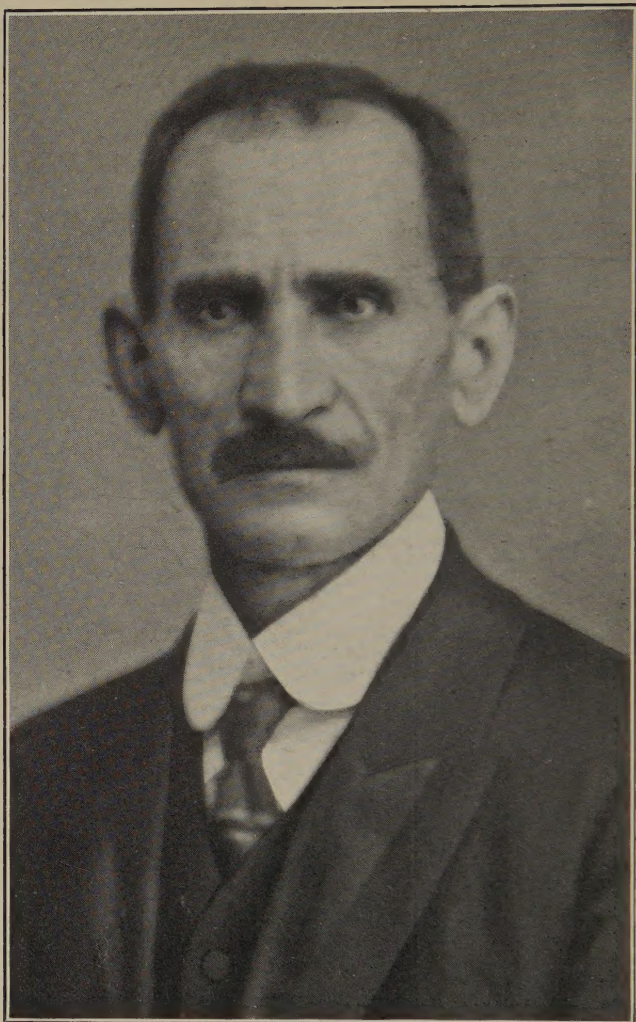
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Professor 'Abdu 'l-Ahad Dáwúd, B.D., the writer of the present series of articles entitled "Muhammad in the Old Testament," which will be followed by the two other equally erudite series, under the headings of "Muhammad in the New Testament" and "Muhammad in the Besorah," is the former Reverend David Benjamin Keldani, B.D., a Roman Catholic priest of the Uniate-Chaldean sect. A brief sketch of his biography appears elsewhere in the pages of the current issue.

When asked how he came to Islam he wrote:

"My conversion to Islam cannot be attributed to any cause other than the gracious direction of the Almighty Allah. Without this Divine guidance all learning, search, and other efforts to find the Truth may even lead one astray. The moment I believed in the Absolute Unity of God His Holy Apostle Muhammad became the pattern of my conduct and behaviour."

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
نَحْمَدُهُ وَنُصَلِّي عَلَى رَسُولِهِ الْكَرِيمِ

THE ISLAMIC REVIEW

SHA'BĀN-RAMAZĀN, 1347 A.H.

VOL. XVII.

FEBRUARY, 1929 A.C.

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A Word about Fasting.

By the time the present number of the *Islamic Review* is in the hands of our readers, they will be well advanced in the month of Ramadhān.

The institution of fasting in Islam is as universal as prayer. In Islam it is one of the four practical ordinances, the others being prayer, poor-rate, and pilgrimage.

We are writing from a quarter of the world where materialism reigns supreme, where men attach more importance to the words of the British Medical Association than to those of Buddha, Jesus, and Muhammad; and for this reason our constant return to a subject which may well seem hackneyed to not a few of our readers calls for no apology on our part. On the contrary, we are convinced that a repetition of all that is contained in the verses of the Qur-ān on the subject of fasting can hardly be superfluous, more especially when we bear in mind that a wave of materialism is rapidly engulfing the civilized world. Is it not strange to find that even the fact that Buddha, Jesus, Muhammad—in short, all the world's

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religious leaders—underwent the discipline of fasting, is not regarded as enough, in itself, to convince a layman that there is more in this fasting than meets the eye? Is it not strange that this circumstance should seem to have failed to disclose a channel of thought—a channel well worth exploring?

Besides the factor which has helped the decline of fasting the world over, a great portion of the blame must lie with the teachings of the dogmatized Church, which, instead of putting a check on this tendency, has given it a stimulus by teaching that Jesus's atonement absolved Christians from all such disciplinary life as is aimed at by the institution of fasting. Even the Roman Catholic Church has greatly mitigated its once rigorous laws in this matter, in spite of the fact that Jesus fasted for forty days in the desert (Matt. iv. 2), and commanded his followers to fast also (Matt. vi. 16). To the modern Catholic, for instance, fasting consists of violet vestments, the absence of flowers on the altar, the omission of the "Gloria" in the Mass and of the "Te Deum" during the recitation of the Divine Office. Numerous exemptions are granted by the Roman Church in these days, and the tendency of the Lenten Regulations is more and more towards leniency.

Now the question of fasting may be considered both from the spiritual and physical points of view, and it is being gradually realized that, from either, fasting itself is a helpful practice for man. From the physical or medical viewpoint it has been found to be an efficient cure for numerous ailments, because fasting gives the life-force within us room and breathing space in which to sweep up the litter of our wrong living. Disease, it should be remembered, is the norm of wrong thought and action. Disease is an expression of what we actually are. If we would be well, we must be different. To effect a change in our bodily rhythm we must give the body at least a brief surcease from the complicated and continuous miracle of converting beef and bread into warmth, action, and thought. We must fast, as a sick animal fasts.

In Europe, fasting cure institutions are becoming the fashion, and such cures are extremely popular in America.

Islam did not abolish certain of the institutions existing

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before its advent, but incorporated them with its own system, imparting to them at the same time a significance far nobler and grander than was ever attached to them before. Thus in Islam fasting became an institution for the improvement not only of the physical but also of the moral and spiritual condition of man. This aim is plainly stated in the words of the Qur-án which deal with fasting. The Qur-án says fasting is commanded you "so that you may guard against evil." This verse shows that fasting in Islam does not mean simply abstaining from food. It helps to engender in us the moral stamina necessary for withstanding the temptations of all unlawful things, in any form whatsoever. For example, a person who can give up lawful food in obedience to the commandments of God will find that it is inconceivable for him to devour anything which is already unlawful. Fasting thus helps to make us stronger and nobler citizens.

The commandments as to fasting are contained in the verses (Qur-án, ii. 183, 184) which read:—

"O you who believe! fasting is prescribed for you, as it was prescribed for those before you, so that you may guard against evil.

"For a certain number of days; but whoever among you is sick or on a journey, then he shall fast a like number of other days; and those who are able to do it may effect a redemption by feeding a poor man; so whoever does good spontaneously it is better for him; and that you fast is better for you if you know."

Confusing Issues.

The Reverend H. E. E. Hayes, formerly a missionary in Egypt, speaking in St. Barnabas Church, Croydon, said¹:—

"Under the Islamic system of religion woman was terribly degraded, for religious lawyers said that when a woman married she became the slave of her husband. He could beat her and ill-treat her as he pleased so long as he did not break a bone or cause too much blood to flow.

¹ *Croydon Advertiser* for November 10, 1928.

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“ He could have four legal wives at once and as many concubines as he pleased. He could divorce a wife for no reason at all. The result was that there was no real family life. Women became furtive and deceitful and were in the habit of stealing from their husbands to make provision for themselves against the day of divorce.”

It is not because we attach any great importance to the words of Mr. Hayes, or have any generous desire to immortalize his name and his grotesque views by printing them in the pages of the *Islamic Review*, that we quote him. Rather do we give him as a sample of those whose stock-in-trade consists of such allegations, differing in words and turns of expression, but in essentials always the same.

The status of woman in Islam has been discussed over and over again in these pages. Even now we are printing an essay on the subject from the able pen of Mr. C. A. Soorma, LL.M., Barrister-at-Law. We will not, therefore, attempt here to trespass on his ground, save only by pointing out that Mr. Hayes, like his colleagues, is guilty of making a serious blunder. He is confusing the social conditions of a country with the religious teachings it professes. If he wanted to show the superiority of the Christian teachings as contained in the Scriptures to those contained in the Qur-án and the Hadith, it is but just that he should not confound social conditions with religious teachings. For the sake of a clear understanding of the question, we ought scrupulously to keep these aspects apart. Just as Christianity cannot be credited with the present-day condition of woman in the West if its teachings go otherwise, in the same way Islam cannot be held responsible for any of the social ills under which woman here and there is suffering if its teachings are conducive to the amelioration of her status.

We are convinced that this sort of confusion is due to the Christian missionary's need to keep alive and active the sympathies of those upon whom he depends. He is piqued at the success which Islam is achieving everywhere; and instead of trying to understand the real causes of that success

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—which lie in the fact that Islam offers equal privileges to all, that Islam knows no colour-line, that Islam is free from the encumbrance of an organized priesthood—the Christian missionary just confuses social conditions with the religious teachings of Islam.

Every student of the Islamic code knows that the status of woman has been enormously improved thereby, as compared with the Christian system. Missionaries must know this, for they are much better educated on the subject of Islam than they were a quarter of a century ago. Yet—and it is a thousand pities—they do not scruple to raise the partisan cry of a debased womanhood under Islam, wherever local conditions involve domestic hardship. Such tactics are unworthy of honourable opponents. *We, for our part, never reproach Christianity when we visit districts in the poorer quarters of the big towns of England and see women leading lives of drudgery or being knocked about by their husbands.* Or “becoming furtive and deceitful and in the habit of stealing”—to quote Mr. Hayes—because their English husbands are given to betting and drinking.

A Thief with a Lamp in his Hand.

Connected with the above is a claim which is still bolder than that already discussed. We are told by the same authority¹ that

“Christianity offered something entirely different, for Christ revered womanhood. Women in Christian countries had not realized how much they owed to His life and teaching. He was really the founder of the joyous spirit of family life, and that alone justified the work of missions to Moslems.

“There were thousands of secret Christian believers in Moslem lands to day. They had to be secret followers because of the possibility of terrible persecution. Yet there were many who preferred to suffer, and who, because of their faith and sacrifice, would put many Christians to shame.” Now, it is a fact that it is becoming quite a fashion with

¹ *Croydon Advertiser* for November 10, 1928.

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the Christian clergy to appropriate to themselves all the credit for all that is good in existing conditions and to disclaim responsibility for all that is discreditable. To this end, one more often than not juggles with the words "European" and "Christian," using them as if they were synonymous terms. Nowadays the hocus-pocus tactics of the clergy have been reinforced by the modernizing movements which are spreading apace in various Muslim countries. For instance, we are told that Turkey, Afghanistan, and Persia are following the "Western and Christian ideals."¹

An answer to both of these assertions is contained in the remarks given below, which we borrow from our contemporary *The Light* (Lahore) for October 18, 1928.

"*The Epiphany* quotes St. Paul in the New Testament to show how Christianity honours woman and remarks that 'the Christian Church honours a woman, Mary, the Blessed Mother of Our Lord, as pre-eminent among all the Saints of God.' We honour Mary because she deserves our honour and the Holy Qur-án teaches us to do so. But one must note how slightlyingly this 'Blessed Mother of Our Lord' was addressed by the Lord himself. St. John's Gospel says: 'And when the wine failed, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, They have no wine. And Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee?' (ii. 3-4): And see what St. Paul observes about the equality of man and woman in the same New Testament (1 Cor. ii. 3, 8-10): 'But I would have you know that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God. . . . For the man is not of the woman, but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man. For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head because of the angels.' (In the last verse the word *power* has thus been explained in the Bible (Revised Version): A covering in sign that she is under the power of her husband.)

¹ *The Epiphany*, Calcutta, quoted by *The Light*, Lahore, for October 18, 1928.

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“ According to St. Chrysostom, woman is ‘ a necessary evil, a desirable calamity, a deadly fascination, and painted ill.’ St. Clement of Alexandria says: ‘ Above all it seems right that we turn away from the sight of women.’ St. Jerome thus accuses women: ‘ You destroyed so easily God’s image, man. On account of your desert, that is death ; even the Son of God had to die.’

“ In the sixth century the church council of Macon was actually discussing whether woman was a human being. The council of Carthage (391 A.C.) forbade woman to catechize, to baptize, or even to study except with her husband. John Knox, the father of Calvinism, declared: ‘ From all women, be she married or unmarried, is all authoritie taken. . . . Because in the nature of woman lurketh such vices, as in good governors are not tolerable.’ Also, he says, nature ‘ doth point them forthe to be weak, frail, impatient, feeble, foolish ; and experience hath declared them to be unconstant, variable, cruel, and lacking the spirit of counsell and regiment.’ Again, ‘ By the order of nature, by the mouth of St. Paul, the interpreter of God’s sentence, by the example of that commonwealth in which God by his word planted order and policy, and finally by the judgement of the most godly writers, God hath dejected woman from rule, dominion, empire and authority above man.’ The founder of Protestantism, Martin Luther’s, teaching concerning woman was that she should breed children, attend to the house, and obey her husband in all things. ‘ The idol of Christendom, St. Simon Stylites, was sought by his mother for years. For three days and nights she remained outside her son’s door pleading to see him, but was refused. And only after her exhaustion and suffering brought her death at her saintly son’s door did he consent to come out and murmur a prayer *over her corpse*.’ As regards polygamy Sir William Hamilton observes: ‘ Polygamy was never abandoned by either Luther or Malancthon as a religious speculation: both, in more than a single instance, awarded the formal sanction of their authority to its practice. . . .’ In regard to

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polygamy John Milton wrote: 'On what grounds, however, can a practice be considered dishonourable or shameful which is prohibited to no one, even under the Gospel? . . . It appears to me sufficiently established that polygamy is allowed by the law of God.' How the Christian monks and fathers violated sexual morality and played with woman as a chattel is depicted in the following lines: 'In the fifteenth century, the old and wealthy Abbey of St. Albans was little more than a den of prostitutes with whom monks lived openly and avowedly.' We read of an Abbot-elect of St. Augustine's, of Canterbury, who had seventeen illegitimate children in one village; of another Abbot who was proved to have maintained no less than seventy concubines; of a pastor who confessed to having had illicit connections with no less than two hundred nuns confided to his charge; and so late as 1773 of an underground passage between a convent and a nunnery in Rome itself.'

"An Act of Parliament of the time of Henry VIII prohibited women reading the New Testament. 'Spencer, in his *Descriptive Sociology*, notes that wives were bought in England from the fifth to the eleventh century, although as late as the eleventh century the Church Courts ruled that a husband could transfer his wife to another man for a period determinable at the recipient's pleasure.' 'Worse than all was the right of the lord, spiritual or temporal, to the wife of the peasant for the first twenty-four hours after marriage.' 'In 1567 the Scots Parliament decreed that no woman should hold any authority.' "

We wonder if after a perusal of the above anyone could honestly come to the conclusion that Christianity has achieved so much for womankind as Mr. Hayes seems to think.

Indeed, that gentleman's remarks remind us somewhat of a Persian hemistich which when translated reads: How bold of the thief (to enter the house) with a lamp in his hand.

Why the Recital of Fātiha in Prayers is Essential.

When non-Muslim travellers in Muslim countries assert that the Muslim prayers are mechanical and insincere owing

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to their being compulsorily offered in the Arabic language, our Muslim friends, we regret to say, seem ready enough to lend support to such superficial comment. For example, the late Syed Ameer 'Alī, who was a staunch and recognized upholder of the honour of Islam as probably no other Muslim has upheld it, who did much to remove the prevalent misconception of Islam and prejudice against Muslims, says in his well-known book *The Spirit of Islam* (p. 186; London, 1922): "The reformation of Islam will begin when once it is recognized that divine words rendered into any language retain their divine character and that devotions offered in any tongue are acceptable to God."

These few words are typical of the mentality of present-day Muslim youth. And they are in great measure the result of the chaos caused by the multiplicity of sudden changes—each tumbling over the other—to which the Muslim world is being constantly subjected. Their views, although to a certain extent justified, are nevertheless deplorably short-sighted; for they betray a lack of that sense which can perceive beyond the conditions of the moment, and an inability to rise above the limitations of personal motive or predilections.

The Muslim prayer must be recited in Arabic, and the most essential constituent of the Muslim prayer is the Fātiha—or the opening chapter of the Holy Qur-án. *The Fātiha must be recited in Arabic because the Holy Prophet Muhammad* is reported to have said: "Prayer is not complete without the Fātiha."

Now, as far as the Fātiha is concerned, neither Muslims nor non-Muslims find fault with it. For the verses of this chapter express the natural yearning of the soul to be kept on the right path. "A chorus of praise has gone forth for it from the greatest detractors of the Holy Qur-án."¹

It is a fact that no one can derive any benefit from the parrot-like repetition of phrases and verses which convey to him nothing whatever. In prayer it is essential that both the mind and brain of him who prays should be in harmony with

¹ Muhammad Ali, in his translation of the Qur-án (Lahore 1920), p. 3.

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the words he utters. This harmony, it is evident, cannot be established if the brain does not know what the tongue is saying.

Such an objection, in Islam, loses much of its force when we remember that more than half the Muslims of the world have Arabic for their mother-tongue ; nevertheless, the objection has complete validity in the case of dead languages like Sanskrit and Latin ; and Latin is the language of orisons of the Roman Catholics.

We know that man is so much influenced by associations and the temporal circumstances surrounding him that even if a devotee be unaware of the language of the prayers, the very thought that he is in the presence of God the Almighty has been often found enough to engender in him an awe—a fear of God which suffuses all his actions ; and such a feeling becomes all the stronger when a Muslim happens to be in a country not his own and has the opportunity of offering his prayers in a congregation where, though their mother-tongue is quite different from his, he and they pray in one and the same language. We have all of us witnessed pageants, processions, or picturesque military displays, and their effect is normally transient. But imagine the effect of a Muslim congregation on the mind of a Muslim when he finds it to be a mixture of Turks, Kurds, Arabs, Persians, Africans, and Chinese standing abreast, shoulder to shoulder like a wall of iron, behind an Imām who offers prayers in Arabic, the language of the Qur-ān. Such a spectacle is not only imposing, but it has an indelible effect on the spiritual progress of the participants, and it goes a long way towards cementing the bond of the great Muslim Brotherhood. It is due no less to the universal recitation of the Fātiha than to other causes, such as pilgrimage, that a Muslim feels at home in all Muslim countries.

But even so, the fact remains that praying for the fulfilment of a personal object, or for escape from a calamity, or for forgiveness of sins, can be better done and with greater fervour and zeal in one's own mother-tongue than in a foreign language. But it is equally true that if deliverance from adversity or the fulfilment of some special desire be the sole object of our

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prayers, we do not see how any purpose could be served by revelation or set prayers. For is it not a fact that both necessity and diversity of temperament have driven man to bow before lifeless, unhewn stones and have at the same time extracted from him such lofty ideas and grand thoughts as might well befit the lips of a monotheist, so that they can be easily regarded as the natural expression of his soul?

Moreover, any revealed prayer, however self-contained and comprehensive it may be, can never convey all the desires of an individual. Complete fervour and real love can only be expressed in one's own words and one's own language.

That is why Islam places before us quite a new aspect of prayer. It makes it superior to mere personal ends. Islamic prayer, from the point of view of Islam, is the index to religion and a complete reminder of the real Islamic life. It is for this reason that prayer is called *Zikr*—reminder—in the Qur-án : man is kept reminded of the high ideals contained in the *Fātiha*.

But, as we have remarked above, no human being can be free from personal desires and ends, which manifest themselves in various ways, which personal desires can best be expressed in one's own language. And we know for certain that those personal aims cannot in any circumstances be a substitute for a complete and perfect life. So Islam has solved the enigma by enjoining the recital of the *Fātiha* in all our prayers, so that we may not become oblivious of the high ideals of the Islamic life; and by permitting us to express ourselves in our various individual languages while we are prostrating. The Islamic ideal of life is contained in the words *Rahmān*, *Rahīm*, and *Rabb*—all three being the attributes of Allah. According to a tradition of the Prophet, a Muslim is exhorted to try his best to "dye himself in the colours of the attributes of Allah."

There is yet another reason, whereof importance cannot be over-emphasized, and that is the fact that the *Fātiha* cannot be faithfully translated into any other language. The *Rahmān*, *Rahīm*, *Rabb* translated as Beneficent, Merciful, Lord do not convey even an appreciable part of all that they mean to an Arab, or to one conversant with the Arabic language. In spite of this grave defect, one has to content oneself with the expres-

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sions Beneficent, Merciful, and Lord. *Arā Rahmān* means the Beneficent, whose mercy is manifested, before man comes into existence, in the creation of things that are necessary for his life in this world, and therefore without his having done anything to deserve them; while the same attribute is manifested in *Ar-Rahīm* when man has done something to deserve these mercies. Thus the former is the expression of the utmost degree of love and generosity, the latter of unbounded and constant favour and mercy. The Arabic word *Rabb* conveys not only the idea of fostering, bringing up, and nourishing, but also that of regulating, completing, and accomplishing, i.e. of the evolution of things from the crudest state to that of the highest perfection. *Rabb* signifies the fostering of a thing in such a manner as to make it attain one condition after another until it reaches its goal of completion. Hence *Rabb* is the author of all existence, Who has not only given to the whole of the creation its means of nourishment, but has also beforehand ordained for each a sphere of capacity, and within that sphere provided the means by which it continues to attain gradually to its goal of perfection.

It is evident from the above that the words Beneficent, Merciful, and Lord do not even come near to the expression of all that is meant by *Rahmān*, *Rahīm*, *Rabb*.

And how different the world would be if every one of us tried to dye himself in the attributes of the beneficence and mercifulness of God the Almighty!

THE ARAB COMPLEX

By SIRDAR IKBAL ALI SHAH

THE evolution of political events which destroyed the unity of Arabia has been the story of the last quarter of a century of Islamic history, but the process of this evolution, despite a growing Arab political literature, still remains the enigma of the desert. To the Western world the movement was familiarized by that very sensational title the "Revolt of Arabia," and as such it continues to linger in the imagination

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of the British people to this day. The advocates of the Arab cause, however, sharply challenge the allegation of a revolt; for they ask with considerable justice: "Revolt against whom?" True, in reply voices have been raised from different corners of the world when it was stated that it was a revolt against Turkey, a revolt against Islam, and a revolt against the Eastern traditions of the past.

Now, a fact known to a very limited number of living diplomats is that when the Committee of Union and Progress dethroned Sultan Abdul Hamid one of the principal "election promises" of theirs was the grant of self-government to the Arab nation. This was necessary because the Arab educational and economic advancement during the last two decades was so rapid that the signs of pride in the Arab nationalism began to manifest themselves very clearly much prior to King Husain's historical declaration of the Arab Independence in 1916. In a measure it was accentuated both by the European impact and the Turkish cry of Pan-Turanianism, for during the reign of Sultan Mohamed Khamis the flame of Pan-Islamism had all but ceased to glow.

Whether it was due to the ever-changing character of the Turkish politics on the downfall of Sultanic autocracy, or that the Sublime Porte continued to believe in the right of conquest, the fact remains that the pledges given to the Arabs by Enver Pasha and his colleagues were never redeemed. The Arab agitation grew apace, till it hardened into a definite national claim for complete autonomy; and thanks to the surging spirit of Pan-Turanianism, which cut so deeply into Arab sentiments that even the religious influence for keeping the sons of the deserts within the Turkish Imperial fold had lost its appeal: and it is just here that real Islam differs very fundamentally from any other conception of religion or creed; for nationality counts for nothing in Islam: all are brothers, black or brown or white, all servants of a great world-wide confederacy of Al-Islam; not Turks, Indians, and Persians. When once this feeling is gone, the national cry of the Arab was as laudable as that of the Turk: and it is precisely this reason which completely vindicates the House of King Husain.

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When every evidence of an Arab renaissance was unmistakable, surely Turkey committed a great blunder during the war by not granting self-government to the Hijaz and thus losing a powerful ally to her cause in Arabia; for actually at the turning of the tide for Turkish arms Jamal Pasha, the then Governor in Syria, would not listen to giving the leadership of Arabia to King Husain. In place of coaxing the "reactionary desert chieftain" of Mecca to submission and loyalty, he aggravated the difficulty by telegraphing: "If the war came to a victorious conclusion, who could prevent the Government from dealing with you with the greatest severity when it is over?" He behaved like one of those strange enthusiasts one sees that follow imperialistic instincts even to the doom of their nation. Then King Husain showed himself in his true colours. His whole nature reacted passionately and spontaneously, and with such thrills the like of which has not been known in the desert history of our times. The battle which the Arabs fought and won should be called a War of Independence rather than a revolt; and, of course, whether they got that unqualified independence for which they leaped into the arena is, as Kipling would put it, quite another story. Meanwhile, ever glowing, haunting are the visions of an Arab Empire before the eyes of King Husain.

During the period between 1916 and 1926 conditions in Arabia were so shaken up, like the fragments in a kaleidoscope, ever changing into new shapes and bewildering forms, that affairs there became highly complicated; and, barring a few students of high policy in Asia, the average man looked upon them as select and uninviting. The only comprehensible facts are that after a barren dispute the rival Arab chiefs had settled down to ruling Iraq, Transjordan, Yamen, and the Hijaz; and that Great Britain, France, and to a lesser degree Italy, have now very decided interests to keep the rivalries of the Arab people in control because of their mandatory commitments in Palestine and Syria. But no sooner was the Sharifian-Wahabi warfare over than the whole world of Islam was bestirred by the excess which Nejd zealots are alleged to have committed on their victorious march on Mecca. The

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Grand Muslim Conference of 1926 was unsuccessful in soothing the irritation of the faithful against the Wahabi Guardianship of the Holy Places of Islam. Storms of protest brewed both in India and Egypt; the Wahabis called everybody else an impious Muslim, the rest styled Sultan Ibn Saud an irreconcilable Puritan; the future political issue of the Hijaz was in great doubt, the country stood like a man in a fog, uncertain of the path, puzzled by the confusion of ideas and half disposed to give up the venture; for King Ali still held Jeddah. But King Ali, whom I met frequently at Baghdad, is not a man to be the King of the Bedouins who dwell in the desert provisionally and erratically. He is a saint, and saints do not make good kings. His Sharifian personality clings to him like a beautiful odour. Like his scholarly brother, King Abdullah, he left the throne of his fathers to the more virile desert warriors of Nejd. But what a soul these men have! The writer well remembers sitting in the palace at Amam. "You ask of my sentiments about Ibn Saud?" said Amir Abdullah. "We are a very maligned family: for my own part I say that, in spite of the fact that Ibn Saud did not act in a friendly way towards us, and flung us out of our houses one by one, we wish him well, for he protects Allah's house as a strong man should, and in the name of Islam we hope no harm will come to him." He spoke with such emotion that one was profoundly moved.

For purely Islamic interests the rival Arab kings can still meet if side-issues like the raid of Faisal Al Dawish on Iraq could be averted. There are, of course, those who believe that he is far too strong a personality for Ibn Saud to punish; indeed, the leadership of the Akhwans is said to be entirely in the hands of Faisal Al Dawish, and it is sometimes stated that when due to the sinking strength of the Sharifian dynasty an opportunity fluttered in the way of Ibn Saud, it was the delicate handling of Faisal Al Dawish which made it possible for the Wahabi King to get control of the Akhwans for the victory of Mecca. Whatever the case may be, the writer, who has made a close study of these questions on the spot, for one refuses to believe that the unity of Arabia is a forlorn

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hope. It cannot be a union under one King, rather a confederacy of independent kingdoms all working for the greatness and solidarity of the Arab race, never forgetting that they are the guardians of the cradle of a religion to which one-seventh of the human race still bows its head five times a day, and thereby solve the mystery of an Arab complex which has lain buried in the heart of Old Asia so long.

MUHAMMAD IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

By PROFESSOR 'ABDU 'L-AHAD DĀWŪD, B.D.

VIII

"THE LORD AND THE APOSTLE OF THE COVENANT"

[The learned Professor is open to correspondence on the questions discussed and points raised in this article. Readers can write to him care of the Editor, the *Islamic Review*, Woking.—ED. I.R.]

THE last book of the Canonical Jewish Code of the Bible bears the name of "Malachai," which looks to be more a surname than a proper noun. The correct pronunciation of the name is Mālākhī, which means "my angel" or "my messenger." The Hebrew word, "māl'akh," like the Arabic "malak," like the Greek term "angelos" from which the English name "angel" is derived, signifies "a messenger," one commissioned with a message or news to deliver to somebody.

Who this Mālākhī is, in what period of the Jewish history he lived and prophesied, is not known either from the book itself or from any other portion of the Old Testament. It begins with the words: "The 'missa' of the Word of Yahweh the El of Israel by the hand of Mālākhī," which may be translated: "The discourse of the Word of Yāhweh, God of Israel, by the hand of Mālākhī." It contains four short chapters.

The oracle is addressed, not to a king and his courtiers, but to a people already settled in Jerusalem with the Temple

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and its services. The sacrifices and oblations are of the meanest and worst kind; the sheep and cattle offered at the altars are not of the best quality; they are blind, lame, and lean animals. The tithes are not regularly paid, and if at all paid are of the inferior material. The priests, too, naturally, cannot devote their time and energy to perform their sacred duty. For they cannot chew the beefsteaks and roasted mutton-chops of the lean old, crippled sacrifices. They cannot live on the scanty tithes or insufficient stipends. Yāhwah, as usual with this incorrigible people, now threatens, now holds out promises, and at times complains.

This discourse, or oracle, seems to have been delivered by the Prophet Mālākhī in about the beginning of the fourth century before the Christian era, when the people of Israel were also tired of Yahweh; and used to say: "The Table of the Lord (Yahweh) is an abomination, and His meal is contemptible" (Mal. i. 12). "He who doeth evil is good in the eyes of Yahweh, and He is pleased with them; or, where is the God of the judgment?" (Mal. ii. 17).

The Book of Mālākhī, notwithstanding its being of a *post captivitatem* date, is, however, written in a seemly good Hebrew style. To say that this "missa," or discourse, has come down to us intact and unadulterated is to confess ignorance of the language. There are several mutilated sentences, so that it is almost impossible to understand the exact sense they intend to convey.

The subject of our discussion in this article is the famous prediction couched in Mal. iii. 1. The prophecy runs thus:—

"Behold, I send My Messenger, and he shall prepare the way before Me; and suddenly shall come to his temple the Adon whom ye are seeking, and the Messenger of the Covenant whom ye desire. Behold, he cometh, says the Lord of Hosts" (Mal. iii. 1).

This is a well-known Messianic prophecy. All Christian Saints, Fathers, Popes, Patriarchs, Priests, monks, nuns, and even the Sunday-school children, will tell us that the first messenger mentioned in the text is St. John the Baptist, and the second

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messenger, whom their vernacular versions have rendered "Angel of the Covenant," is Jesus Christ!

A definite determination of the subject of this prophecy is of extreme importance, because the Christian Churches have ever since believed that two distinct persons are indicated therein; and the author of this erroneous belief is a singularly remarkable blunder of St. Matthew's. One of the characteristic features of the First Gospel—Matthew—is to show and prove the fulfilment of some particular statement or prediction in the Old Testament concerning nearly every event in the life of Jesus Christ. He is very careless to guard himself against contradictions, and less scrupulous in his quotations from the Hebrew Scriptures. He is certainly not well versed in the literature of his own language. I had occasion to refer in the preceding article of this series to one of his blunders concerning the ass upon which Jesus mounted.¹ This is a most serious point directly touching the authenticity and the validity of the Gospels. Is it possible that the Apostle Matthew should himself be ignorant of the true character of the prophecy of Mālākhī, and ignorantly ascribe to his master a misquotation which would naturally put to question his very quality of a divinely inspired Prophet? Then, what should we think of the author of the Second Gospel—of St. Mark—who ascribes the passage in Mālākhī to Isaiah? (Mark i. 2). Jesus is reported by Matthew (xi. 1-15), and this too is followed or copied by Luke (vii. 18-28), to have declared to the multitude that John the Baptist was "more than a Prophet," that it was he "about whom it was written: Behold, I am sending My Angel before thy face, and he shall prepare thy way before thee"; and that "none among those born by women was greater than John, but the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he." The corruption of the text of Mālākhī is plain and deliberately made. The original text tells us that Yahweh Sabaoth, i.e. God of Hosts, is the speaker and the believers are the people addressed, as can be readily seen in the words "whom ye are seeking . . . whom ye desire." God says: "Behold, I send My messenger, and he shall prepare

¹ See *I.R.*, January, 1929, p. 18.

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the way before *My* face." But the Gospels have interpolated the text by effacing the personal pronoun of the first person singular, and inserted "before *thee*" (or "thy face," as in Hebrew) *twice*. It is generally believed that Matthew wrote his Gospel in the then vernacular Hebrew or Aramaic in order to prove to the Jews that God, addressing Jesus Christ, said: "Behold, I send My messenger (Angel) [such is the version in Matthew xi. 10] before thee, and he shall prepare thy way before thee"; and wishes to show that this angel or messenger was John the Baptist. Then a contrast between John and Jesus is left to Jesus, who describes John as above every prophet and greater than the sons of all human mothers, but the least in the Kingdom of Heaven—of which Jesus is meant to be the King—is greater than John.

I do not believe for a second that Jesus or any of his disciples could have made use of such language with the object of perverting the Word of God, but some fanatical monk or an ignorant bishop has forged this text and put into the mouth of Jesus the words which no prophet would speak.

The traditional idea that the Messenger commissioned to prepare or repair the way before the "Adon" and the "Messenger of the Covenant" is a servant and subordinate of the latter, and therefore to conclude that two distinct persons are predicted is a creation of the ignorance concerning the importance of the mission and the magnitude of the work assigned to that messenger. He is not to be supposed as a pioneer or even an engineer appointed to construct roads and bridges for the passing of a royal procession. Let us therefore pore over this subject more deeply and in a courageous, impartial, and dispassionate manner.

1. In the first place, we must well understand that the Messenger is a man, a creature of human body and soul, and that he is not an Angel or a superhuman being. In the second place, we should open our eyes of wisdom and judgment to see that he is not despatched to prepare the way before another Messenger called "Adon" and the "Messenger of the Promise," but he is commissioned to *found* and *establish* a *straight, safe, and good Religion*. He is commissioned to remove

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all the obstacles in the way between God and His creatures; and to fill up all the gaps and chasms in this grand path, so that it may be smooth, easy to walk on, well lighted, and protected from all danger. The Hebrew phrase, "u pinna derekh," means to say that the Messenger "will put straight and clear the worship or the religion." The verb "*dārākh*" of the same root as the Arabic "*dārāka*," means "to walk, reach, and comprehend"; and the substantive "*derekh*" signifies, "road, way, step," and metaphorically "worship and religion." It is used in this spiritual sense all through the Psalms and the Prophets. Surely this high Messenger of God was not coming to repair or reform a way, a religion for the benefit of a handful of Jews, but to establish a universal and an unchangeable religion for all men. Though the Jewish religion inculcates the existence of one true God, still their conception of Him as a national Deity of Israel, their priesthood, sacrificial rites and ceremonies, and then the non-existence of any positive articles of belief in the immortality of the soul, the resurrection of the dead, the last judgment, the eternal life in heaven or hell, and many other deficient points, make it absolutely unfit and insufficient for the peoples of diverse languages, races, climates, temperaments, and habits. As regards Christianity, it, with its meaningless seven sacraments, its beliefs in original sin, the incarnation of a god—unknown to all previous religious and mythological literature—and in a trinity of individual gods, and finally because it does not possess a *single line in scripto* from its supposed founder, Jesus Christ, has done no good to mankind. On the contrary, it has caused divisions and sects, all imbued with bitter feelings of hatred and rancour against each other.

The Messenger, then, was commissioned with the abrogating of both those religions and the establishing of the ancient religion of Abraham and Ishmael and the other Prophets, with new precepts for all men. It was to be the shortest road to "reach" God; the simplest religion to worship Him, and the safest Faith to remain ever pure and unadulterated with superstition and stupid dogmas. The Messenger was commissioned to prepare a road, a religion that will conduct all who

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wish to believe in and love the One God without having need of the leadership of hundreds of self-appointed guides and pretenders. And above all, the Messenger was to come suddenly to his temple, whether it be the one in Jerusalem or the one in Mecca; he was to root out all idolatry in those countries, not only by the destruction of idols and images, but also inculcating in their former worshippers the faith in one true Allah. And the accomplishment of this stupendous task, namely, to construct a new Path, a universal religion, that teaches that between God and man no absolute mediator, no priest, saint or sacrament, is at all permissible, has only been done by an apostle whose name is Muhammad al-Mustaphā!

2. John the Baptist was not the Messenger foretold by Mālākhī. The accounts given about him by the four Evangelists are very contradictory, but the one thing that they together agree on is that he prepared no way at all; for he was not accredited with a sacred scripture: he neither founded a religion nor reformed the old one. He is reported to have left his parents and home while still a youth; he lived in the desert on honey and the locust; and spent there his life until he was about thirty years old, when he showed himself to the multitudes on the banks of the River Jordan, where he used to baptize the penitent sinners who confessed their sins to him. While Matthew knows nothing of his relationship with Jesus, or does not care to report it, Luke, who wrote his Gospel, *not* from a revelation, but from the works of the disciples of the Master, records the homage rendered by John to Jesus when both in the wombs of their mothers (Luke i. 39-46). He baptizes Jesus in the waters of the River Jordan like everybody else, and is reported to have said that he (John) was "not worthy to bow down to untie the laces of the shoes" (Mark i. 7) of Jesus, and according to the Fourth Gospel he (John) exclaimed that Jesus was "the Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world" (John i. 29). That he knew Jesus and recognized him to be the Christ is quite evident. Yet when he was imprisoned he sends his disciples to Jesus, asking him: "Art thou he who is to come, or should we anticipate another one?" (Matt. xi. 3, etc.). The Baptist was martyred in the

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prison because he reprimanded an infidel Edomite, King Herod the Tetrarch, for having married the wife of his own brother. Thus ends, according to the narrative of the Evangelists, the life of a very chaste and holy prophet.

It is strange that the Jews did not receive John as a prophet. It is also stranger still to find that the Gospel of Barnabas does not mention the Baptist; and what is more, it puts the words said to have been uttered by John concerning Christ into the mouth of the latter about Muhammad, the Apostle of Allah. The Qur-án mentions the miraculous birth of John under the name of "Yahya," but does not refer to his mission of baptism.

The description of his sermon is given in the third chapter of Matthew. He seems to have announced the approach of the Kingdom of Heaven and the advent of a Great Apostle and Prophet of God who would baptize the believers, not with *water*, "but with fire and with the holy spirit."

Now, if John the Baptist were the Messenger appointed by God to prepare the way before Jesus Christ, and if he was his herald and subordinate, there is no sense and wisdom whatever in John to go about baptizing the crowds in the waters of a river or a pond and to occupy himself with half a dozen disciples. He ought to have immediately followed and adhered to Jesus when he had seen and known him! He did nothing of the kind! Of course, a Muslim always speaks of a prophet with utmost respect and reverence, and I am not expected to comment further, as an Ernest Renan or an indifferent critic would do! But to say that a prophet whom they describe as a dervish of the wilderness clad in the skins of animals, and a dervish who comes forth and sees his "Adon" and the "Angel of the Covenant," and *then* does not follow and cleave to him, is ridiculous and incredible. To think and believe that a prophet is sent by God to prepare the way, to purify and clear the religion for the coming of his superior, and then describing him as living all his life in the desert among the animals, is to tell us that he was constructing *chaussées*, causeways or railways, *not* for men, but for beasts and genii.

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3. Nor was John the Baptist the Prophet Elijah or Elias, as Christ is made to have said. The Prophet Mālākhī, in his fourth chapter (verses 5, 6), speaks of the coming of Elijah, which fact is foretold to take place some time before the day of the Resurrection and not before the Appearance of the Messenger in question. Even if Christ had said that John was Elijah, the people did not know him. What Jesus meant to say was that the two were similar in their ascetical life, their zeal for God, their courage in scolding and admonishing the kings and the hypocrite leaders of the religion.

I cannot go on discussing this untenable claim of the Churches concerning John being the Messenger "to prepare the way." But I must add that this Baptist did not abrogate one iota of the Law of Moses, nor add to it a tittle. And as to baptism, it is the old Jewish *ma'muditha* or ablution. Washing or ablution could not be considered a "religion" or "way" whose place has been taken by the famous and mysterious Church institution of the Sacrament of Baptism!

4. If I say that Jesus Christ is not intended in the prophecy of Mālākhī, it would seem that I was advancing an *argumentum in absurdum*, because nobody will contradict or make an objection to my statement. The Churches have always believed that the "Messenger of the way" is John the Baptist, and not Jesus. The Jews, however, accept neither of the two. But as the person foretold in the prophecy is one and the same, and *not two*, I most conscientiously declare that Jesus is not, and could not be, that person. If Jesus was a god, as he is now believed to be, then he could not be employed to prepare the way before the face of Yahweh Sabaoth! If Jesus were the Yahweh Sabaoth who made this prophecy, then who was the other Yahweh Sabaoth before *whose face* the way was to be prepared? If he were a simple man, made of flesh and blood, and servant of the Lord of Hosts, then the claim falls to the ground. For Jesus as a simple human being and prophet could not be the founder of the trinitarian Churches. Whichever form of the Christian religion we may take, whether it be the Orthodox, Catholic, Protestant, Salvationist, Quaker, or any of the multitudinous sects and

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communities, none of them can be the "way," the "religion" indicated by Mālākhī; and Jesus is *not* its founder or preparer. So long as we deny the absolute Oneness of God, we are in error, and Jesus cannot be our friend nor can he help us.

5. The person indicated in the prophecy has three qualifications, namely, the Messenger of Religion, the Lord Commander, and the Messenger of the Covenant. He is also described and distinguished by three conditions, namely, "he is suddenly coming to his Mosque or Temple, he is looked for and sought by men, and is greatly desired and coveted."

Who can, then, be this glorious man, this Great Benefactor of humanity, and this valiant Commander who rendered noble services in the cause of Allah and His religion other than Muhammad?—upon whom may rest God's peace and blessing.

He brought to the world an unrivalled Sacred Book, Al-Qur-ān, a most reasonable, simple, and beneficial religion of Islam, and has been the means of guidance and conversion of millions and millions of the heathen nations in all parts of the globe, and has transformed them all into one universal and united Brotherhood, which constitutes the true and formal "Kingdom of Allah" upon the earth announced by Jesus and John the Baptist. It is futile and childish to compare either Jesus or John with the great Apostle of Allah, when we know perfectly well that neither of these two did ever attempt to convert a single pagan nor succeeded in persuading the Jews to recognize his mission.

RABB AND ABB

By KHWAJA KAMAL-UD-DIN

THE Reverend Mr. Cash has moved my pen again, and this time on a subject of vital importance to humanity; that is to say, Prayer and the Islamic View of Prayer. Unfortunately I have not been able to write at all for the last two years, as I have been seriously ill during the whole of that period. Though still convalescent, yet I think I can manage to attempt, at least, to pay the debt which, as Mr. Cash imagines, we owe

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to Christianity; but first it will be as well for me to outline briefly his position as I understand it. He thinks¹ that we are meanly attempting to enrich our literature by introducing some of the Christian conceptions of theology into our writings. *Rabb* and *Abb*, the two Arabic words, are used respectively by Muslims and Christians in invoking the Deity. The latter means "Father," but the former has wrongly been translated into English as "Lord." The word has indeed a very vast significance, which I will try to indicate. It is an adjectival name that the Qur-án gives as one of the names of Allah at the very outset. It is true that the word "Lord," the wrong translation of *Rabb*, does not properly imply any such loving-kindness and affection as are associated with the word "Father." This has led Mr. Cash to make a mountain out of a molehill in his recent book *The Expansion of Islam*. He thinks that Muslim theology cannot soar to such heights in its conception of the Godhead, and that we, recognizing that deficiency, have been at pains to borrow from the Christian phraseology, and now use *Abb*—Father—in the place of *Rabb* in our prayers. He supports his assertions by quoting certain prayers composed by Lord Headley.²

Mr. Cash's latest effort contains many other similar absurdities, which will be noticed later, when I am further restored to health. At present I confine myself to the remarks that he has made concerning these two words. One may excuse an English writer on the subject, but Mr. Cash professes to know something of the Arabic language, and a reference to any Arabic lexicon would be enough to show him his mistake.

Rabb in Arabic has a very vast meaning. It not only means Creator and nourisher of humanity, but One who creates and maintains all such things as are necessary for our nourishment; and all this He does of His own accord. A father is under a sort of obligation to his children for their

¹ *Expansion of Islam*, by Rev. W. Cash (London, 1928), p. 232.

² Dear Father, Thou art very near;
I feel Thy Presence everywhere,
In darkest night, in brightest day,
To show the path, direct the way!

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maintenance, but *Rabb*, as the Qur-án says, owes no such debt. He did all this for us out of His Compassion and Mercy, long before we came into existence. Nay, the things that were needful for us were created by Him millions of years before the human need for them arose. We have a claim on parental charity, but His blessings come to us without our meriting them. A father doubtless cherishes feelings of love and affection for his children, but it is nothing for him to be proud of, seeing that he is actuated by impulses reposed in human nature by Allah. If the Sun and other manifestations of Nature cannot claim our gratitude for all they do for our existence, a father would stand in the same category with them in this respect; all praise should go to *Rabb*, as the Qur-án says, Who created passions of love and affection in the breast of a father, without which he would have been as hard as a stone. Again, the activities of a father are confined to his children's maintenance and upbringing, but what of those high faculties and instincts in us that prompt us to progress and advancement? It is *Rabb*, as the Al-Qur-án says, who endows such ennobling capacities and then provides means to bring them to perfection. He defines clearly the various stages through which we have to pass in order to reach our goal, and creates for all that is needful in each stage; and all this out of His love for us; but for which we should have been as the beasts of the field. *Rabb* placed in our nature a divine element, that raises us from the mire of animalism to the precincts of divinity. Could a father dream of being able to accomplish even a semblance of all this? The Sacred Book refers to many other actions of affection and kindness, when speaking of *Rabb*, that are just as necessary for our growth, and an Arabic lexicon includes all such divine actions in giving its meaning of the word. I will come to these later. But I am justified if I say that the word *Rabb*, for the significations I have given above, eclipses the word "Father" with all the ideas of affection and love attached to the latter.

It should not be forgotten that whatever may be the conception of the Godhead, in any religion or community, they

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focus in it all that is good and excellent with them; and if happy expressions and a good choice of words to convey certain conceptions are an essential part of diction and style, our expressions should also be free from the use of words which are likely to inspire unpleasant and undesirable associations. The word "father" may evoke best feelings of love and regard in a well brought-up child when he hears the word, but what of the feelings of a foundling or of a neglected child? Has not the world also seen fathers who are quite unaware of the whereabouts or even the existence of their children? Motherless children, too, under the roof of a father with a second wife, have often cause to complain of the treatment they receive. There are innumerable instances of neglectful fathers, and for this reason "Father" is not a proper word for the Deity

Pure Monotheism, as preached in Islam, will not permit of any word as a synonym for God which is used also for a creature, and in this respect Islam can claim an exclusive beauty. Of all the words which other religions or Communities have made use of to express the Deity, Allah is the only word in the whole world of languages which, since the creation of the Arabic language, was exclusively reserved as the name of the Most High. What are we to say, then, of a word of such common occurrence as "father"? Unfortunately its use in reference to God has brought polytheistic tendencies into play in all ages and countries. Jesus is a recent Son of God of two thousand years' standing; but Paganism has seen hundreds of such Son-Gods from time to time. Should we not, therefore, avoid the use of this word if it inspires such polytheistic ideas?

No doubt Lord Headley has used "Father" when speaking of Allah, but he laboured under disadvantages similar to those which the Lord of Christianity had to face in his day. Jesus was a Jew and, as a true Prophet of God, had a very arduous task before him to disabuse his people's mind of the terrible ideas then prevalent of God: His jealousy, tyranny, and relentless severity in demanding a rigid fulfilment of the law, and His ruthlessness towards sinners, which were among the

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characteristics of Jehova. Jesus came with the Gospel of God's love for humanity, and for want of a better word in the language he spoke, he could not do other than choose the word "Father" to serve his purpose. He sought to impress upon his followers that God was not cruel, as described in their scriptures, but loving as a father to his son. Personally I think he would have done better if he had adopted the word "mother" instead, as the ancient Hindu scriptures did, because a mother feels more affection and tender feeling for her child than a father. In this respect Islam surpasses Hindu and Christian theology alike when it says that *Rabb* is more affectionate and kind to His creatures than a mother to her children.¹

A FEW ASPECTS OF RATIONALISM IN ISLAM

By S. M. RAHMAN, M.L.C., Akola (Berar)

STUDENTS of Islamic history are familiar with a strange phenomenon—periods of rationalistic activity, followed by intellectual inertia, mental lethargy, and lassitude of the mind. This again, after an interval of a couple of centuries, is succeeded by intense intellectual activity—this cycle has been going on since the very inception of Islam. It is necessary to take stock of this fact, at this period in Islam's history, when the Islamic world is again throbbing and pulsating with thought, as evidenced in rationalistic tendencies, in religion, in Turkey of Mustafā Kemāl, Afghanistān of Amānullah, Persia of Razā Shāh, and Egypt of the late Sa'ad Zaghlūl. That nothing new is happening, no violent departure is taking place, will be apparent to all those who have studied the history of Islamic civilization. What took place in the 'Abbaside Baghdad, Ommyyade Cordova, and Fatimide Egypt is taking place to-day—History is, for the thousandth time, repeating itself, with the exactitude, precision, and regularity of an immutable law of Nature. How far this law holds good

¹ A saying of the Prophet Muhammad.

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in other religions must be the most enthralling and edifying aspect of the study of comparative religions, especially when we know that the intellectual agencies, as Buckle calls them, are acting and reacting in every sphere of a nation's cultural evolution.

The Rationalistic School of Islam, using Rationalism in the broader sense of the term, and not in the narrower sense in which it was used by Comte in the nineteenth century or by Frederic Harrison in our own time, first came into existence in the reign of Ommeyyads of Damascus. This revolution against the conservatism of Unreason was led by Ma'bada 'l-Juhanī, 'Allama Yūnus, and Gīlān Dimishkī. It sprang up, mainly, owing to the uncompromising fatalism of *Jabarias*, just as the present revolt against the Mulla-made dogma has been precipitated by the fanatical conventionalism of the present-day doctors of faith and their pathetic insistence on form rather than on the innate spirit of Islam. Its birth heralded the dawn of enlightenment, the epoch of true Islamic Renaissance. This period in Islamic history manifests signs of almost feverish intellectual activity, marking a distinct era in the history of civilization. Like the Periclean Age of Greece and Augustan Age of Rome, it was the Golden Age of Islam.

Baghdad, which was once the summer capital of Chosroes Anūshirvān, the famous king of Persia, was made the metropolis of the 'Abbaside Empire, by Mansūr, in 145 A.H. By Mansūr's command philosophical and scientific works in foreign languages were translated into Arabic—works of Aristotle, of Ptolemy, of Euclid; Sanskrit books like *Hitopadesha* and *Siddhanta*. Numerous lecture-rooms and colleges filled the city. The Nizāmīeh University, established by Naizāmu 'l-Mulk, the famous Grand Vizier of Malik Shāh, the Seljūkī king, was every year producing scores of scholars. The Caliph's agents were ransacking every corner of the known globe for treasures of knowledge. Galen, Themistius, Aristotle, and Plato were studied with almost religious reverence side by side with the Holy Qur-ān. This intellectual movement, as we find from Kremer, was not limited to Baghdad. It had crossed the Tigris and reached the banks of the Nile and the Guadalquivir.

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The entire Islamic world was in the grip of progress. Cairo and Cordova had become such famous seats of learning that scholars from Christian Europe used to flock to them. Cordova was the *alma mater* of Pope Sylvester II. The first six Abbaside Caliphs, from Mansūr to Mu'tazid-billāh, vied with each other in extending patronage to learning, and Almu'izz, Augustus of Muslim Africa, strove to outshine his royal brothers of Baghdad. A host of scientists and philosophers, too many to enumerate, like Mūsā ibn Shākir, evolved from the crude notions of the ancients a systematized science of astronomy, Abdu 'l-Rahmān Sūfī, Ibn Rushd, the famous Averroes of European scholars, whose discoveries in the realm of physical science still evoke admiration from the fore-researches of Europe, and Alberunī, the author of that monument of learning and research, Canon Masudicus or Qānoon-i-Mas'ūdī, these Universities had sent forth in the world as torchbearers of knowledge. The mind was as lovely as the body, says a European historian of Cordova. Her professors had made Cordova the centre of civilization in Europe, says another chronicler of Saracenic Spain. Under Hakam al-Mustansir-billāh, Moorish Spain had become the cradle of culture in which modern civilization itself was nursed. The views of this school, which were the direct outcome of the wave of intellectualism, pervading the entire Islamic world at the time, were much influenced by the impact of Islam with the Greek philosophy, in the same way as the modernist tendencies in the Islamic world of to-day are mainly the result of the present scientific age. The Rationalists preached free thought and free will, employing methods of elucidation which are familiar to the students of John Stuart Mill and Bergson. They accepted the authority of the Qur-án and produced Qur-ánic sanctions for their rationalistic doctrines, like the great philosophers of ancient India, such as Vyasa, Patanjali, or even Kapila, the father of Indian philosophy, who got sanctions for what they wrote and preached from Upanishads. Imām Gazzālī, the later sponsor of this school, imparted a new arrestive force to the Rationalistic doctrines of free thought and free will, and the doctrines rallied all the scholars of the Islamic world

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round his standard. The study of Greek philosophy and logic by Arabic savants like Abū Huzail bin Sa'ir, helped them to assimilate many ideas borrowed from Greek sources. Though these Rationalists divided themselves into several schools, with minor difference, appeal to reason was the bed-rock of their faith. They maintained that Reason, Knowledge, and Understanding were the basic principles of Islam and that dogma and ritual were the mere accessories of the Islamic Faith. Man is a rational animal and reason is the differentia distinguishing man from the beast, and therefore, they argued, everything pertaining to man must be based on reason. No religious tenet, which is against reason, must be followed, as God's supreme Reason can never order a man to perpetrate an act of Unreason. They referred to the undiluted precepts of the Qur-án, and not to the opinions of the commentators and their disputations.

That they were right in the supreme appeal to reason in interpreting religion is amply borne out by the Holy Qur-án itself. As Sir William Muir admits, the Holy Prophet always appealed to the phenomena of Nature as signs of the divine presence. His first appeal was to man's reason, and his last appeal was to his understanding. "I am only a preacher of God's words, the bringer of God's message to mankind, and not a miracle-worker," once cried the Prophet in extreme anguish.

"In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate. It is He Who out of the midst of illiterate Arabs has raised an apostle to show them His signs, and to teach them the Scriptures and the wisdom, them who had before been in great darkness."

"In the creation of the heaven and earth, and the alternation of night and day; in the rain-water, which God sendeth, quickening again the dead earth, and in the change of winds and the clouds, balanced between heaven and earth, are signs for the people of understanding. God has given man the Scriptures and the wisdom."

These are a few of the messages of the Holy Qur-án to mankind. Think, ponder, understand, is the clarion call of

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the Islamic Scriptures. "The ink of the scholar was more holy than the blood of the martyr" is a famous saying of the Prophet. "Seek knowledge unto China" is another well-known precept. "He who leaves his home for knowledge walks in the path of God" is another Islamic injunction. "I am the city of knowledge and 'Alī is the gate," once said the Holy Prophet, addressing his companions. It is worthy of note that this was preached at a time when the whole world was steeped in ignorance. Babylon, which was the centre of Asiatic civilization for centuries, had become the hotbed of superstition and had succeeded in imparting an irrational character to Judaism. The Assyrian Empire had fallen into pieces "engrafting the superstition of celestial co-ordination on Zoroastrianism." Christianity had assumed forms which had nothing to do with the teachings of Jesus Christ. Reason had been banished and ostracized from Christendom. The second Council of Ephesus was, primarily, convened to suppress free thought. In the streets of Alexandria a woman, whose home was the rendezvous of the learned, was slaughtered in cold blood by a Christian "saint." "A simple speedy death," says Gibbon, "was the mercy which Rationalists could rarely obtain" in Christian Europe. Under such circumstances, and in such environments of the "Dark Age," the philosophers of Islam preached and practised a Rationalism which raised the Islamic Faith to that high pedestal of intellect from which it will ever radiate its true glory.

ISLAM'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS WOMEN AND ORPHANS

By C. A. SOORMA

(Continued from the January (1929) number, p. 33.)

CHAPTER XIX

DIVORCE IN ISLAM

(continued)

- (e) "Divorce may be (*pronounced*) twice; then keep (*them*) in good fellowship or let (*them*) go with kindness;

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and it is not lawful for you to take (*away*) any part of what you have given them, unless both fear that they cannot keep within the limits of Allah; then if you fear that they cannot keep within the limits of Allah, *there is no blame on them for what she gives up to become free thereby*. These are the limits of Allah, so do not exceed them, and whoever exceeds the limits of Allah, these it is that are the unjust", (ii. 229).

A very important verse indeed!

"The *third* rule regarding divorce is that the *revocable* divorce of the previous verse can be pronounced only twice. In the days of ignorance, a man used to divorce his wife and take her back within the prescribed time, even though he might do this a thousand times", (as we have noticed above). "Islam reformed this practice by allowing a revocable divorce twice, so that the period of waiting in each of these two cases might serve as a period of temporary separation during which conjugal relations could be re-established. The *fourth* point is that the husband must make his choice after the second divorce either to retain her permanently or to bring about a final separation. The object of a true marriage union is indicated in the simple words *keep them in good fellowship*, and where, owing to discussions, it is impossible to remain in good fellowship, then the man must let the woman *go with kindness*," and where the marriage has been a failure, "it is both in the interests of the husband and the wife and in the interests of society itself that such a union should be brought to a termination, so that the parties may seek a fresh union. But even in taking this final step, the woman must be treated kindly. . . . The full payment of the dowry to the woman is the *fifth* rule relating to the Islamic law of divorce, and it serves as a very strong check upon the husband in resorting to unnecessary divorce. The dowry is usually sufficiently large to make divorce a step which can only be adopted as a last measure", (Muhammad Ali, *op. cit.*, p. 106).

The *sixth* rule with regard to divorce is *the right of the*

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wife to claim a divorce. This is technically called *Khula'*. "Among the religions of the world, it is one of the distinguished characteristics of Islam that it gives the wife the same right to claim a divorce as it gives the husband to pronounce one, if she is willing to forgo the whole or part of the dowry. The case of Jameelah, wife of Sabit bin Qais, is one that is reported in numerous reports of the highest authority. Here it was the wife who was dissatisfied with the marriage. There was not even a quarrel, as she plainly stated in her complaint to the Prophet: 'I do not find any fault with him on account of his morals (i.e. *his treatment*), or his religion.' She only hated him. And the Holy Prophet had her divorced on condition that she returned to her husband the garden which he had made over to her as her dowry (*reported by Bukhari*). It is even said that the husband's love for the wife was as intense as her hatred for him. If, then, a woman could claim a divorce for no reason other than the unsuitableness of the match, she had certainly the *right* to claim one if there was ill-treatment on the part of the husband or any other satisfactory reason, and among the early Muslims it was an established right. Even now it is a right which is maintained in many Islamic countries", (Muhammad Ali, *op. cit.*, p. 106 ; Ameer Ali, *Mahomedan Law*, vol. ii. pp. 567-578).

"The words *if you fear* evidently refer to the properly constituted authorities, and this brings us to the *seventh* point with regard to the law of divorce, viz. that the authorities can interfere in the matter, and cases are actually on record in which a wrong done by an unjust divorce was mended by the authorities", (Muhammad Ali, *op. cit.*, p. 107).

The last point to note in connection with the above verse (ii. 229) is that Allah forbids anyone to go beyond the limits He has imposed, and if either does so, then he or she is unjust.

- (f) "So if he divorces her she shall not be lawful to him afterwards until she marries another husband; then if he divorces her there is no blame on them both if they return to each other (by marriage) if they

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think they can keep within the limits of Allah, and these are the limits of Allah which He makes clear for a people who know ", (ii. 230).

" After the irrevocable divorce is pronounced the husband cannot re-marry the divorced wife until she has been married elsewhere and divorced, and this is the *eighth* point with regard to the law of divorce. The verse abolishes the immoral custom of *ḥalálah*, a temporary marriage gone through with no other object than that of legalizing the divorced wife for the first husband, a custom prevalent in the days of ignorance, but abolished by the Holy Prophet, according to a report which speaks of his having cursed those who indulge in the evil practice. There must be a genuine marriage and a genuine divorce. *This restriction makes the third pronouncement of divorce very cautious*, and, in fact, very rare, and this acts as another check against frequent divorce. Muir's remarks as to the hardship which this rule involves not only for 'the innocent wife' but also for 'the innocent children,' for 'however desirous the husband may be of undoing the wrong the decision cannot be recalled,' are totally unjustified, for the irrevocable divorce cannot be pronounced until a temporary separation has taken place twice and the experiences of both have shown that the marriage relationship cannot be continued. It should also be noted that the irrevocable divorce cannot be pronounced all at once. The special checks on divorce have already been mentioned, and it may be added here that the third or the irrevocable divorce would be very rare if the rules relating to divorce as given in the Holy Qur-án are observed. Cases are on record in which long years have elapsed between the pronouncement of the first and the second divorce. For instance, the case of Rukána may be noted, who first divorced his wife in the time of the Holy Prophet, then re-married her, then divorced her a second time in the time of 'Umar, the second Caliph, and finally in the time of 'Uṣmán, the third Caliph " (Muhammad Ali, *op. cit.*, p. 107).

(To be continued.)

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A SHORT BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF PROFESSOR 'ABDU 'L-AHAD DÁWÚD, B.D.

'ABDU 'L-AHAD DÁWÚD is the former Rev. David Benjamin Keldani, B.D., a Roman Catholic priest of the Uniate-Chaldean sect. He was born in 1867 at Urmia in Persia; educated from his early infancy in that town. From 1886-89 (three years) he was on the teaching staff of the Archbishop of Canterbury's Mission to the Assyrian (Nestorian) Christians at Urmia. In 1892 he was sent by Cardinal Vaughan to Rome, where he underwent a course of philosophical and theological studies at the Propaganda Fide College, and in 1895 was ordained Priest. In 1892 Professor Dáwúd contributed a series of articles to *The Tablet* on "Assyria, Rome and Canterbury"; and also to the *Irish Record* on the "Authenticity of the Pentateuch." He has several translations of the *Ave Maria* in different languages, published in the *Illustrated Catholic Missions*. While in Constantinople on his way to Persia in 1895, he contributed a long series of articles in English and French to the daily paper, published there under the name of *The Levant Herald*, on "Eastern Churches." In 1895 he joined the French Lazarist Mission at Urmia, and published for the first time in the history of that Mission a periodical in the vernacular Syriac called *Qala-La-Shrárá*, i.e. "The Voice of Truth." In 1897 he was delegated by two Uniate-Chaldean Archbishops of Urmia and of Salmas to represent the Eastern Catholics at the Eucharistic Congress held at Paray-le-Monial in France under the presidency of Cardinal Perraud. This was, of course, an official invitation. The paper read at the Congress by "Father Benjamin" was published in the *Annals* of the Eucharistic Congress, called "Le Pellerin" of that year. In this paper, the Chaldean Arch-Priest (that being his official title) deplored the Catholic system of education among the Nestorians, and foretold the imminent appearance of the Russian priests in Urmia.

In 1888 Father Benjamin was back again in Persia. In

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his native village, Digala, about a mile from the town, he opened a school *gratis*. The next year he was sent by the Ecclesiastical authorities to take charge of the diocese of Salmas, where a sharp and scandalous conflict between the Uniate Archbishop, Khudabásh, and the Lazarist Fathers for a long time had been menacing a schism. On the day of New Year 1900, Father Benjamin preached his last and memorable sermon to a large congregation, including many non-Catholic Armenians and others in the Cathedral of St. George's, Khorovábad, Salmas. The preacher's subject was "New Century and New Men." He recalled the fact that the Nestorian Missionaries, before the appearance of Islam, had preached the Gospel in all Asia; that they had numerous establishments in India (especially at the Malabar coast), in Tartary, China and Mongolia; and that they translated the Gospel to the Turkish Uighurs and in other languages; that the Catholic, American and Anglican Missions, in spite of the little good they had done to the Assyro-Chaldean nation in the way of preliminary education, had split the nation—already a handful—in Persia, Kurdistan and Mesopotamia into numerous hostile sects; and that their efforts were destined to bring about the final collapse. Consequently he advised the natives to make some sacrifices in order to stand upon their own legs like *men*, and not to depend upon the foreign missions, etc.

The preacher was perfectly right in principle; but his remarks were unfavourable to the interests of the Lord's Missionaries. This sermon hastily brought the Apostolique Delegate, Mgr. Lésné, from Urmia to Salmas. He remained to the last a friend of Father Benjamin. They both returned to Urmia. A new Russian Mission had already been established in Urmia since 1899. The Nestorians were enthusiastically embracing the religion of the "holy" Tsar of All Russias!

Five big and ostentatious missions—Americans, Anglicans, French, Germans and Russians—with their colleges, Press backed up by rich religious societies, Consuls and Ambassadors, were endeavouring to convert about one hundred thousand

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Assyro-Chaldeans from Nestorian heresy unto one or another of the five heresies. But the Russian Mission soon outstripped the others, and it was this mission which in 1915 pushed or forced the Assyrians of Persia, as well as the mountaineer tribes of Kurdistan, who had then immigrated into the plains of Salmas and Urmia, to take up arms against their respective Governments. The result was that half of this people perished in the war and the rest expelled from their native lands.

The great question which for a long time had been working its solution in the mind of this priest was now approaching its climax. Was Christianity, with all its multitudinous shapes and colours, and with its unauthentic, spurious and corrupted Scriptures, the *true* Religion of God? In the summer of 1900 he retired to his small villa in the middle of vineyards near the celebrated fountain of Cháli-Boulaghi in Digala, and there for a month spent his time in prayer and meditation, reading over and over the Scriptures in their original texts. The crisis ended in a formal resignation sent in to the Uniate Archbishop of Urmia, in which he frankly explained to Mar (Mgr.) Touma Audu the reasons for abandoning his sacerdotal functions. All attempts made by the ecclesiastical authorities to withdraw his decision were of no avail. There was no personal quarrel or dispute between Father Benjamin and his superiors; it was all a question of conscience.

For several months Mr. Dáwúd—as he was now called—was employed in Tabriz as Inspector in the Persian Service of Posts and Customs under the Belgian experts. Then he was taken into the service of the Crown Prince Muhammad 'Alí Mirzá as teacher and translator. It was in 1903 that he again visited England and there joined the Unitarian Community. And in 1904 he was sent by the British and Foreign Unitarian Association to carry on an educational and enlightening work among his country people. On his way to Persia he visited Constantinople; and after several interviews with the Sheikhu 'l-Islám Jemálu 'd-Dín Effendi and other Ulémas, he embraced the Holy Religion of Islam.

WHAT IS ISLAM?

WHAT IS ISLAM?

[The following is a very brief account of Islam, and some of its teaching. For further details, please write to the IMÁM of the Mosque, Woking.]

ISLAM, THE RELIGION OF PEACE.—The word Islam literally means: (1) Peace; (2) the way to achieve peace; (3) submission; as submission to another's will is the safest course to establish peace. The word in its religious sense signifies complete submission to the Will of God.

OBJECT OF THE RELIGION.—Islam provides its followers with the perfect code whereby they may work out what is noble and good in man, and thus maintain peace between man and man.

THE PROPHETS OF ISLAM.—Muhammad, popularly known as the Prophet of Islam, was, however, the last Prophet of the Faith. Muslims, i.e. the followers of Islam, accept all such of the world's prophets, including Abraham, Moses, and Jesus, as revealed the Will of God for the guidance of humanity.

THE QUR-ÁN.—The Gospel of the Muslim is the Qur-án. Muslims believe in the Divine origin of every other sacred book, but, inasmuch as all such previous revelations have become corrupted through human interpolation, the Qur-án, the last Book of God, came as a recapitulation of the former Gospels.

ARTICLES OF FAITH IN ISLAM.—These are seven in number: belief in (1) Allah; (2) angels; (3) books from God; (4) messengers from God; (5) the hereafter; (6) the measurement of good and evil; (7) resurrection after death.

The life after death, according to Islamic teaching, is not a new life, but only a continuance of this life, bringing its hidden realities into light. It is a life of unlimited progress; those who qualify themselves in this life for the progress will enter into Paradise, which is another name for the said progressive life after death, and those who get their faculties stunted by their misdeeds in this life will be the denizens of the hell—a life incapable of appreciating heavenly bliss, and of torment—in order to get themselves purged of all impurities and thus to become fit for the life in heaven. State after death is an image of the spiritual state, in this life.

The sixth article of faith has been confused by some with what is popularly known as Fatalism. A Muslim neither believes in Fatalism nor Predestination; he believes in Premeasurement. Everything created by God is for good in the given use and under the given circumstances. Its abuse is evil and suffering.

PILLARS OF ISLAM.—These are five in number: (1) declaration of faith in the Oneness of God, and in the Divine Messengership of Muhammad; (2) prayer; (3) fasting; (4) almsgiving; (5) pilgrimage to the Holy Shrine of Mecca.

ATTRIBUTES OF GOD.—The Muslims worship one God—the Almighty, the All-knowing, the All-just, the Cherisher of all the

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Worlds, the Friend, the Guide, the Helper. There is none like Him. He has no partner. He is neither begotten nor has He begotten any son or daughter. He is Indivisible in Person. He is the Light of the heaven and the earth, the Merciful, the Compassionate, the Glorious, the Magnificent, the Beautiful, the Eternal, the Infinite, the First and the Last.

FAITH AND ACTION.—Faith without action is a dead letter. Faith is of itself insufficient, unless translated into action. A Muslim believes in his own personal accountability for his actions in this life and in the hereafter. Each must bear his own burden, and none can expiate for another's sin.

ETHICS IN ISLAM.—"Imbue yourself with Divine attributes," says the noble Prophet. God is the prototype of man, and His attributes form the basis of Muslim ethics. Righteousness in Islam consists in leading a life in complete harmony with the Divine attributes. To act otherwise is sin.

CAPABILITIES OF MAN IN ISLAM.—The Muslim believes in the inherent sinlessness of man's nature which, made of the goodliest fibre, is capable of unlimited progress, setting him above the angels and leading him to the border of Divinity.

THE POSITION OF WOMAN IN ISLAM.—Men and women come from the same essence, possess the same soul, and they have been equipped with equal capability for intellectual, spiritual, and moral attainment. Islam places man and woman under like obligations, the one to the other.

EQUALITY OF MANKIND AND THE BROTHERHOOD OF ISLAM.—Islam is the religion of the Unity of God and the equality of mankind. Lineage, riches, and family honours are accidental things; virtue and the service of humanity are the matters of real merit. Distinctions of colour, race, and creed are unknown in the ranks of Islam. All mankind is of one family, and Islam has succeeded in welding the black and the white into one fraternal whole.

PERSONAL JUDGMENT.—Islam encourages the exercise of personal judgment and respects difference of opinion, which, according to the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad, is a blessing of God.

KNOWLEDGE.—The pursuit of knowledge is a duty in Islam, and it is the acquisition of knowledge that makes men superior to angels.

SANCTITY OF LABOUR.—Every labour which enables man to live honestly is respected. Idleness is deemed a sin.

CHARITY.—All the faculties of man have been given to him as a trust from God, for the benefit of his fellow-creatures. It is man's duty to live for others, and his charities must be applied without any distinction of persons. Charity in Islam brings man nearer to God. Charity and the giving of alms have been made obligatory, and every person who possesses property above a certain limit has to pay a tax, levied on the rich for the benefit of the poor.